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AUTHOR Wells, Ruth Herman
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ABSTRACT

This document is one of eight in a series of guides designed to help teach and counsel troubled youth. It contains 20 lessons that focus on a variety of coping skills. Lesson 1 helps students to reduce their anxiety and to learn that it is normal and expectable to make mistakes. Several lessons offer suggestions on ways to help to build students' self-esteem and to help students to work cooperatively and make more honest contributions during group counseling sessions. Other lessons help students learn more effective ways to interact with parents and siblings at home; to acknowledge their own personal improvements; and to evaluate their dependence on substances, people, or other things. One lesson helps students to understand themselves in the context of their past and future; several others help students to evaluate gang membership. Other lessons focus on actually making changes, providing feedback, and understanding the costs on one's actions before one acts. A number of lessons focus on denial and how to break through it, especially as it relates to gang activities and dependency. (NB)

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Breakthrough Strategies to
TEACH and COUNSEL
Troubled Youth

Social Skills • School Skills • Coping Skills LESSON SERIES

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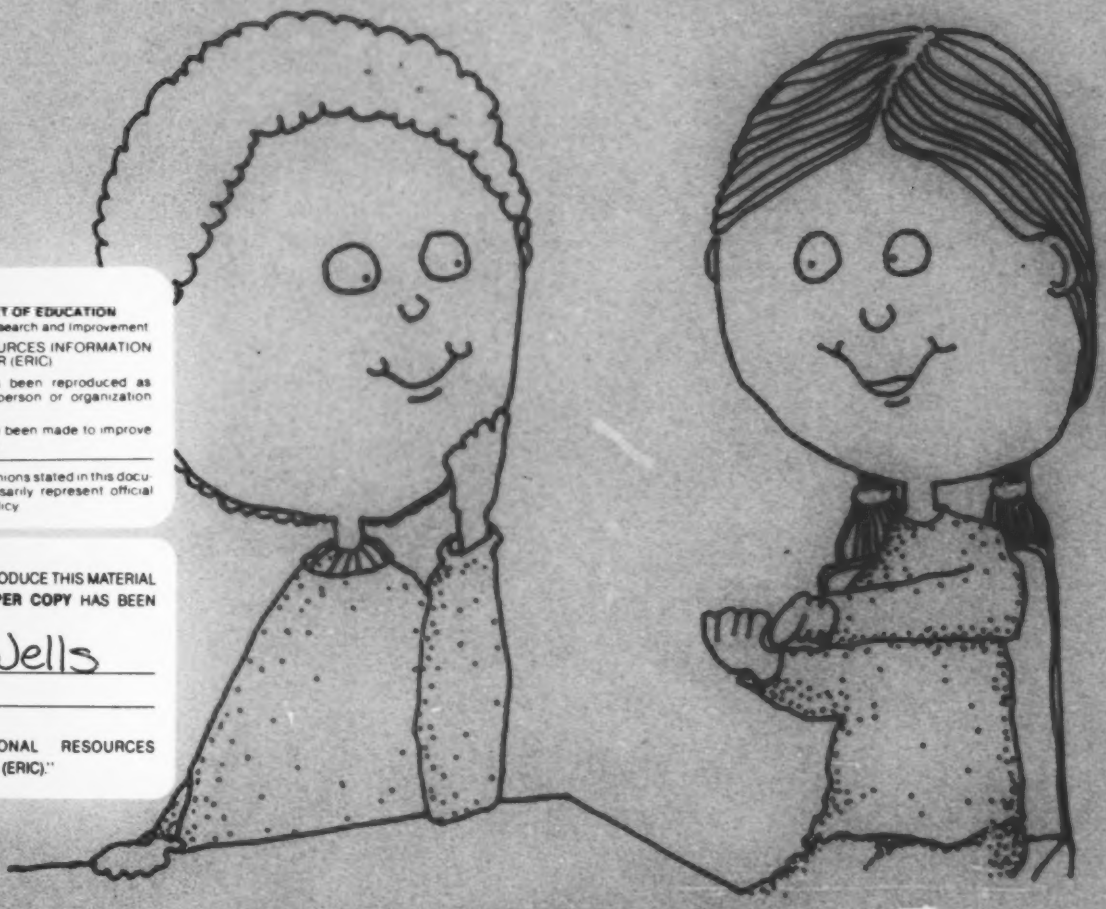

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Coping Skills Sampler

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Coping Skills

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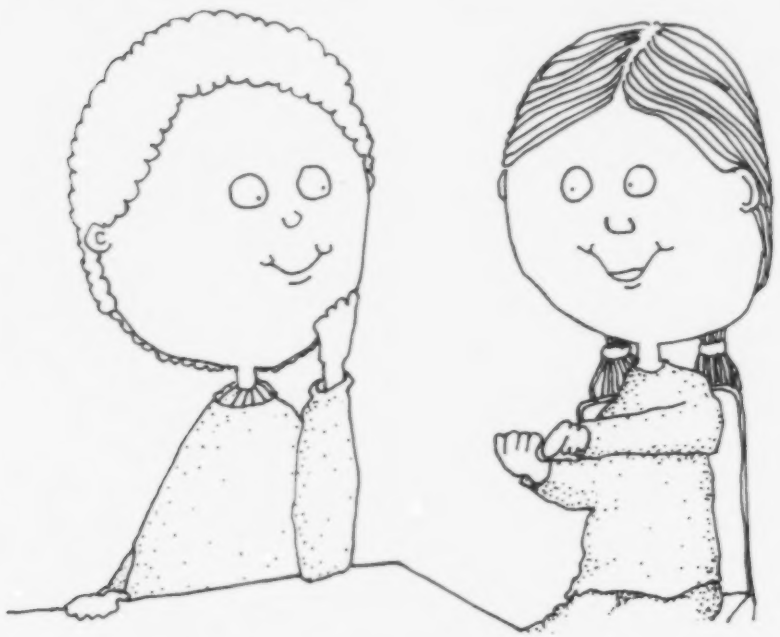

Coping Skills Sampler

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Coping Skills

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Lesson 1

Everybody Makes Mistooks

Goal: To assist students who are competence-anxious, to reduce their anxiety and to understand and believe that mistakes are normal and expectable.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, pens, one copy for each student of "What Really Happens When You Make a Mistake?", and one copy for each student of the blank version of "What Really Happens When You Make a Mistake?"

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be learning about making mistakes. **Ask** the class to discuss if making mistakes is acceptable, and if all people make mistakes; is anybody perfect?

2. ▲ **Assist** the students to identify that sometimes we can believe that we must be "perfect" or else we face overwhelming consequences. **Pass out** the copies of "What Really Happens When You Make a Mistake?" and **ask** the students to discuss it. **Assist** the class to recognize that common, everyday mistakes, such as tardiness, not knowing an answer during a class discussion and forgetting someone's name, do not really engender the consequences pictured in the handout.

▲ **Assist** the class to develop a list of "Expectable Mistakes" and "Unacceptable Mistakes" and **group** their responses into two columns on the board. Expectable mistakes should include everyday oversights such as losing your jacket, missing the bus and incorrectly answering a question on a quiz. Unacceptable mistakes should include items such as hitting people, stealing and vandalizing.

▲ **Aid** the students to realize that making "Expectable Mistakes" is normal and does not bring dire consequences; it is only the Unacceptable Mistakes that truly generate the dire, extreme consequences.

▲ **Direct** the students to complete the blank copies of "What Really Happens When You Make a Mistake" by illustrating what really happens when Expectable Mistakes occur. **Contrast** the first and second versions of the handout.

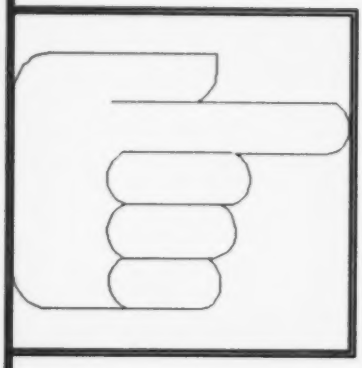
3. ▲ **Ask** the students to consider if famous people ever make mistakes. **Ask** each student to name a hero they have and to speculate on what type of mistakes their heros make. For example, The New Kids on the Block might miss the tour bus and arrive late for a concert.

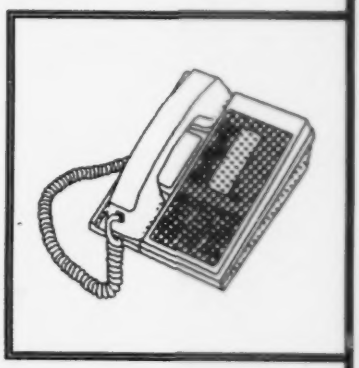
4. ▲ **Ask** the students to note that errors are expected even in sports. **Ask** the class to recall errors made by million dollar baseball players, and note that statistics are kept on these errors. **Note** that all people, even million dollar baseball players make mistakes. Beginning with yourself, **ask** each person to relay a mistake that they've recently made. **Follow** each story with the questions below:

- *Are you perfect?*
- *Did you survive your mistake?*
- *Will you ever make another mistake?*

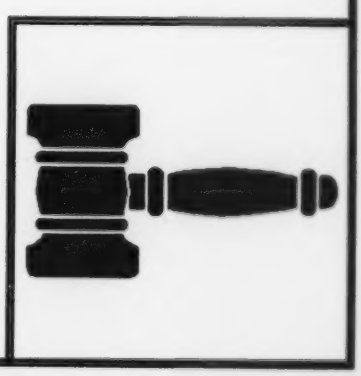
5. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**
- **Everyone makes mistakes.**
- **Only unacceptable mistakes usually result in dire consequences.**

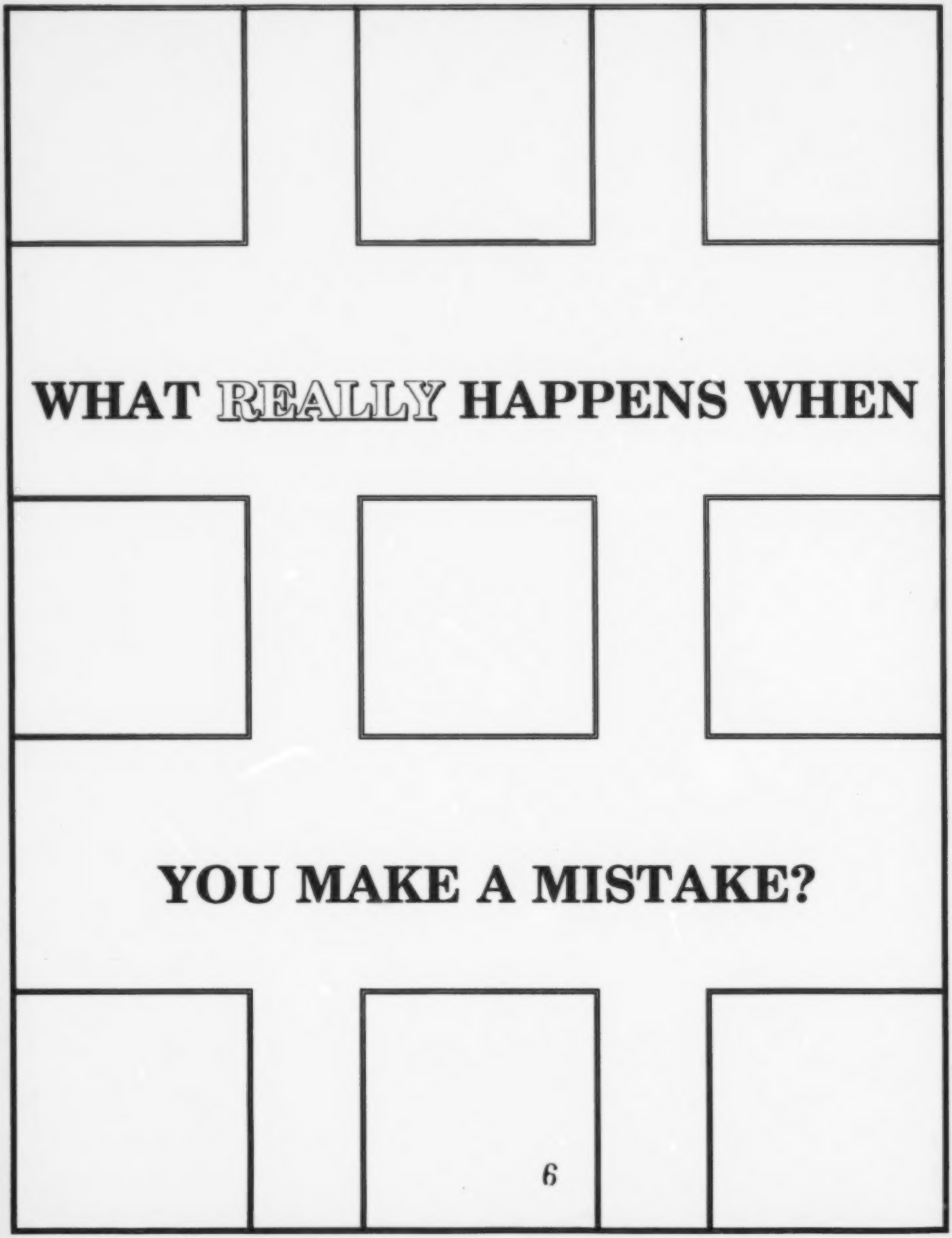
WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN





YOU MAKE A MISTAKE?





WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN

YOU MAKE A MISTAKE?

Lesson 2

I'm a Star

Goal: To build students' self-esteem, and to aid students to understand that they can feel self-worth even if there are things about themselves they are unhappy with.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, pens, one copy for each student of the "Top Ten Ways I'm a Star", paper.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be investigating if there are some good things about them. **Ask** each student indicate how many "good things" they believe there are about themselves. **Assist** the class to recognize that each student has many good qualities.

2. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will discovering how many positive things there are about themselves by listening to feedback from peers. **Assist** the class to offer each student positive feedback about themselves.

3. ▲ **Pass out** copies of the "Top Ten Ways I'm a Star" and **ask** each student to write down ten of the positive things s/he heard as feedback about themselves; students can also use positive items they devise.

▲ **Ask** one student at a time to share their list. (Reluctant students can be asked to share just one or two items, and can be allowed to develop a list of "Top Ten Reasons I'm OK" if they are not yet ready to complete the Star List.)

4. ▲ **Ask** the students if it is possible to be a "star" with many good qualities and still have behaviors that are problematic. **Assist** the students to recognize that no one is perfect, that everyone makes mistakes, but they are still "good people". **Note** that having problems or things we are unhappy with doesn't mean we're not "stars". **Ask** the students to note one thing that they would like to change about themselves, and to **develop** a plan to do so. **Note** that by reducing problem areas, we can feel more comfortable, in control, and "at peace" with ourselves. **Assist** each student to review their plan with the class.

5. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **Everyone has flaws and makes mistakes.**
- **You can feel positively about yourself even if you have flaws.**
- **By moderating your problems, you can feel more powerful and positive about yourself.**

☆ ✯ THE TOP 10 REASONS ✯ ☆
✪ ✵ ✶ I'M A STAR ✳ ❋ ✱

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Lesson 3

Learning to Be Honest

Goal: To assist students to make more honest contributions during group counseling sessions.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, one small slip of paper for each student, pens.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be investigating whether honesty is important to group participation, and elsewhere in life. **Ask** each student to identify five things they will want/have to do in life, such as get a driver's license or become a beautician. **Aid** the class to determine if dishonestly will bring satisfactory results for each item listed on the students' lists. **Include** in the discussion, consideration of the likely consequences of dishonesty, and **aid** the students to conclude that dishonesty will not work well in most of the situations they are likely to encounter in life.

2. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will now consider if dishonesty can work in the group setting. **Pass out** the slips of paper and ask each student to write on the slip, one problem they could actually have. **Direct** the students to keep their slip and to not reveal it until directed to do so during the upcoming experiment. **Read** the directions to the experiment:
In this experiment, you will investigate if dishonesty can work in the group environment. When it is your turn, you will role-play a person who is working to bring up their problem (from your slip of paper) to the group, but instead of doing so as honestly and directly as possible, is deliberately lying and misleading. The group will be working to determine the problem while you mislead them. There is a two minute time limit because you are likely to discover that the group can't even determine what the problem is on your slip of paper when you are not honest and direct with them. After two minutes, the group leader will direct you to show your slip of paper then report if lying works in group.

3. ▲ **Direct** the group to identify other problems with lying in group. **Aid** the students to determine that the following items are jeopardized: safety, trust, team work, cooperation, problem-solving, conflict resolution, personal change, personal growth and relief from problems. **Aid** the group to determine that honesty is essential to proper group functioning.

▲ **Ask** each student to indicate what problems they have with being honest, including such comments as "I just don't like to bring things up" to "I have a hard time being honest about things that could get me in trouble". **Aid** each student to develop a plan to monitor to their weak areas, including such plans as a hand signal to alert the group to lying, or a sign (printed with "Are you telling the truth?") that students could make and use to confront each other about lying.

▲ **Assist** the students to role-play using the solutions they have selected.

4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **Dishonesty severely impairs group functioning.**
- **The group can't assist members if participants are dishonest, withholding or misleading about problems or feelings.**

Lesson 4

It Can Be Tough Being a Kid

Goal: To assist students to learn effective ways to interact with parents and siblings at home.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, several copies of the "It Can Be Tough Being a Kid Quiz", several pens.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be learning about effective ways to interact with family members. **Ask** the students to divide up into three groups: first born, middle born and last born children. **Direct** each group to move to a different part of the room, then to discuss the items on the "It Can Be Tough Being a Kid" Questionnaire.

2. ▲ **Direct** each group to return to the central area but to remain with their group. **Review** each group's questionnaire, one group at a time. **Assist** the students to identify the special benefits and constraints of being a first, middle or last born child, and to acknowledge that no matter what your birth order, being part of a family can be challenging.

3. ▲ **Inform** the class that they will be identifying techniques that work to help youth cope with the challenges of being part of a family. **Assist** the students to identify techniques that work and don't work and **list** these methods into two columns on the board under the headings "Techniques that Don't Work" and "Techniques that do Work". **Include** methods such as "throw a tantrum" and "leave the area".

▲ **Assist** the students to make up two stories, the first using the methods in the "Don't Work" column, and the second using the methods from the "Do Work" column. **Compare** the results of the two stories and aid the students to note that the successful methods create far superior results.

4. ▲ **Ask** each student to select the one problem method that they need to avoid using, and the positive method that could work best for them. **Ask** the students to use their methods and to report their results at the next group.

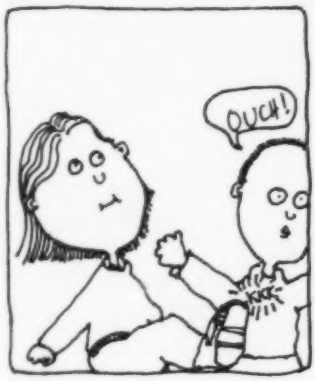
5. ▲ **Review the major points of the lesson.**

- **No matter what your birth order, it can be challenging to be part of a family.**
- **Using problem ways to interact with family members usually worsen the situation.**
- **Using positive ways to interact with family members can improve the situation.**

It Can Be Tough Being a Kid Questionnaire

Answer each of these questions about your group: first, middle or last born kids.

What's the hardest thing about being a first/middle or last born kid?



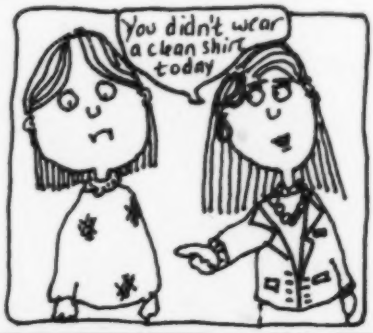
What's the best thing about being a first/middle or last born kid?

How do parents treat first/middle or last born kids differently?

What special problems do you have with siblings because you are a first/middle or last born kid?

What special benefits do you get from your siblings because you are a first/middle or last born kid?

Overall, how do you rate being a first/middle or last born kid?



Lesson 5

The New Improved Me

Goal: To aid students to acknowledge their personal improvements after they have made some personal growth changes

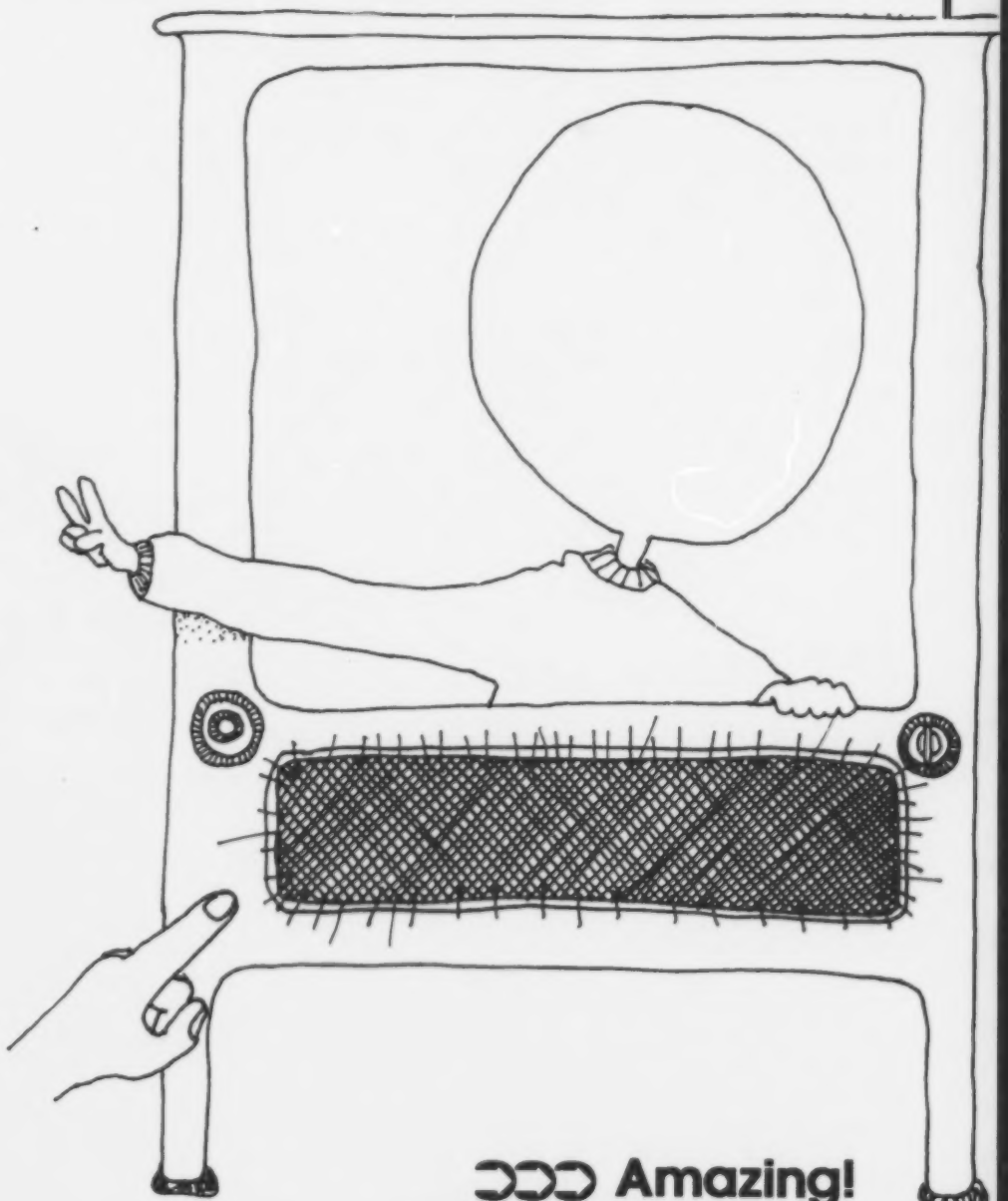
Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, art supplies, one copy for each student of "The New Improved Me Ad".

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be learning more about how great they are. **Direct** the students to pair up with a peer that they work well with. Each pair should develop two advertisements-- one for each student in their pair. The ads can be made on the "New Improved Me Ad" form or using audio/video tape, using art or writing approaches. Each ad should focus on the "New, Improved ME" and highlight what's new and improved.

2. ▲ **Direct** each pair to display or demonstrate their completed ad to the class. **Aid** the class members to offer feedback to each student.

3. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**
   - **Making personal changes can help you feel positively about yourself.**
   - **There are many positive things about you that you may not always notice.**
   - **It is important to acknowledge your positive personal changes.**

THE NEW IMPROVED ME



You'll like...

ↄↄↄ Amazing!
ↄↄↄ Astounding!
ↄↄↄ Absolutely Better than Before!

Lesson 6

Deny it or Not, You May Be Dependent

Goal: To assist students to evaluate if they are dependent on substances, people or other things.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk.

1. ▲ Inform the students that they will be investigating if group members are dependent on people, drugs, gangs, abusive partners, food, etc. **Ask** the students to develop a list of characteristics of dependent people, drawing from the students' observations of gang members, alcoholics, overeaters, etc. **Write** these items in a column on the board.

2. ▲ Ask the students to shape the list of characteristics into a checklist, removing duplicate items. **Write** the final list on the board in checklist form as shown below, and be sure to include all of the following items:

- *Coping with the addiction has become more important than self.*
- *The addiction has altered their personal style.*
- *The addiction has resulted in breaking laws, rules and ethical limits.*
- *The person has altered their own beliefs.*
- *The addiction has interfered with living an independent lifestyle.*
- *The addiction has interfered with normal decision-making.*
- *The addiction has interfered with normal desires, dreams and wishes.*
- *The person has risked their safety and/or that of others.*
- *The person has risked their death, and/or those of others.*
- *Friends report feeling hurt by the addiction, but the person may disagree.*
- *Many acquaintances, peers and neighbors believe there may be an addiction.*
- *Personality changes are noted by others, though the person may disagree.*
- *Personal interests and hobbies are limited, put aside or forgotten.*
- *The person's appearance may have changed or become unkempt.*

3. ▲ Assist each student to self-evaluate using the checklist, and **facilitate** strong peer feedback to confront students who deny their dependency.

▲ **Inform** the students that many dependent people have extensive excuses why they are not dependent, or often state that the criteria for dependency does not apply to them. **Ask** the students to list these rationales on the board, then **aid** the class to debunk each one.

▲ **Ask** each student to think of a dependent person that they know, and without naming them, ask if that dependent person is able to recognize their denial. **Aid** the students to conclude that the dependent person is the least likely to spot their dependency; those around the dependent person are more likely to identify it first.

▲ **Aid** the students who denied dependencies, to address the class's conclusion that denial is often first spotted by those around them, not by the person. For students who insist they remain exceptions, **ask** them to name other ways in life that they are exceptions to accepted laws, rules, assumptions and probabilities about such issues as becoming sick, need for sleep, need for food, etc. Using strong peer feedback, **aid** them to see that in most respects, they are within normal limits most of the time, and this is no exceptions.

4. ▲ Review the major points of this lesson:

- **Dependent people are often the last ones to recognize their dependency.**
- **There are predictable characteristics of dependency.**
- **The characteristics of dependency apply to everyone, just as other rules of science do.**

Lesson 7

Future Homes and Gardens

Goal: To assist students to understand themselves in the context of their past and future, and to see the interplay of past and future, and how coming to grips with the past is important for the future.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, drawing materials.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be learning about themselves with respect to their past and future.

▲ **Direct** the students to draw floor plans of their ideal home of the future when they are adults, then **discuss** the following questions with them:

- *Who are the children present, and what is their state of mind?*
- *What do the children feel and see?*
- *Would there be rooms that your children could not play in? Why?*
- *What events would happen in each room?*
- *What would the dominant mood be in the household?*
- *What would the household rules be?*
- *What would your goals for your children be?*
- *How would you discipline your children?*

2. ▲ **Repeat** the entire process of drawing and discussing, but have the drawing and discussion reflect the past.

▲ **Assist** the students to compare and contrast their drawings and question responses about the future versus the past.

3. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **The past influences the decisions we make in the future.**
- **The future always includes the impact of the past.**
- **To enhance our future, it is necessary, to come to terms with the past.**

Lesson 8

Are You "Doing" or "Talking About Doing"?

Goal: To demonstrate to students the difference between actually making changes in behavior versus just talking about potential changes.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, paper and pen for each student, two copies for each student of the "What I Say and Do Questionnaire", extra paper, one cracker for each student.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be learning more about reaching goals. **Ask** the students to each list some of the goals that they wish to achieve.

▲ **Assist** each student to identify which goals they have accomplished, and which are still in process. **Aid** each student to select one or two incomplete goals that they feel they have made the least progress on. **Ask** each student to indicate why they have been unable to complete their goal, accepting answers such as "It's too hard to come to school every day" or "I haven't actually started practicing yet".

2. ▲ **Ask** the students to learn more about reaching their goals by completing the questionnaire, and **remind** the students to be sure to incorporate the information they have just discussed. **Ask** the students to complete two questionnaires, one for each of two unfinished goals.

▲ **Ask** the students to each review their completed questionnaires one at a time with the group.

Assist the group to offer each student feedback that indicates the difference between doing and talking. **Conclude** each student's turn by asking them to determine which they want for themselves:

- *Which do you want: Results or talk?*

3. ▲ **Assist** the class to further investigate the difference between results and talk through the following experiments:

- *Experiment 1: Give each student a cracker and ask them to demonstrate talking about eating the cracker versus actually reaching that goal.*
- *Experiment 2: Give each student a piece of paper and ask them to demonstrate talking about tearing the paper in half versus actually reaching that goal.*
- *Experiment 3: Ask each student to demonstrate talking about reaching one of their goals versus taking the actual steps they will take to reach that goal.*

▲ **Assist** the class members to each discuss how they could "do more" and "talk less" to reach their goals.

4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **The results you achieve towards reaching your goals relate to how much action you actually take, not how much talking you actually do.**
- **Just talking will not help you reach your goals.**
- **To obtain the results you say you want, you must take certain steps; there is no other way to reach your goal.**

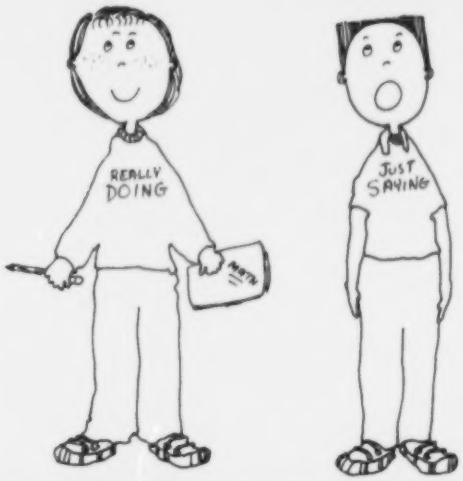
What I Say and Do Questionnaire

List in the "What I Say" Column, all the things you say when you talk about reaching your goal.

List in the "What I Do" Column, all of the actual steps you have consistently and properly taken in a timely manner to reach your goal.

List in the "Steps Necessary" Column the behaviors you must properly complete to get what you say you want.

WHAT I SAY ABOUT REACHING MY GOAL	WHAT I DO TO REACH MY GOAL	STEPS NECESSARY TO REACH MY GOAL



Lesson 9

Learning the Importance of Feedback

Goal: To assist students to understand the importance of giving and receiving personal feedback, and to improve their skills offering and accepting feedback.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, a ball of yarn, one copy for each student of the "Don't Tell Me That! Cartoons".

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be learning about the importance of giving and receiving personal feedback.

▲ **Direct** the students to sit in a circle. **Explain** that each person will be tossing the ball of yarn to the others, and with each throw, will say one positive comment. **Direct** each person receiving feedback to accept the feedback with a thank-you or other comment that properly acknowledges the communication.

2. ▲ As the yarn is tossed to a variety of group members, a web is formed among the group members; **assist** the participants to make this observation and then relate it to the many ties that can develop when people cooperatively share and exchange information. **Discuss** that these connections are also present in real life although in everyday living, they are harder to see. **Continue** to toss the yarn until it is gone and/or everyone has both given and received feedback several times.

3. ▲ **Ask** the students to review the "Don't Tell Me That!" cartoons the **discuss** the consequences of the problematic comments.

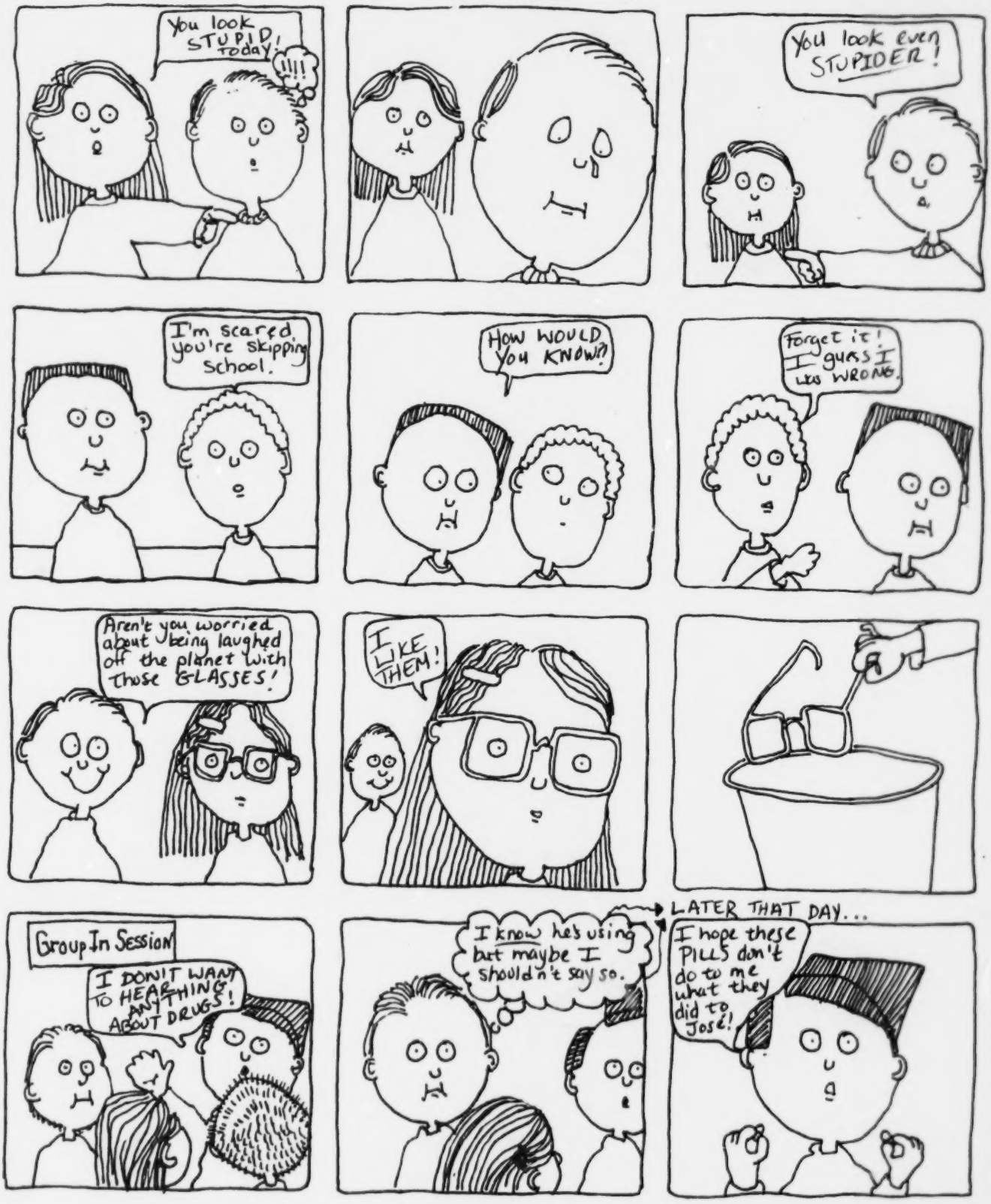
▲ **Ask** the students to develop alternative responses for the problematic comments pictured in the cartoons, and to guess at the likely results of using the improved responses.

4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **Exchanging feedback connects us to other people.**
- **Problematic ways of giving and receiving feedback can create unnecessary difficulties.**
- **In everyday life, it can be harder to see the consequences of problematically giving or accepting feedback.**

DON'T TELL ME THAT!

Cartoons


You look STUPID today!!!!
You look even STUPIDER!
I'm scared you're skipping school.
HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?
Forget it! I guess I was WRONG.
Aren't you worried about being laughed off the planet with those GLASSES!
I LIKE THEM!
LATER THAT DAY...
Group In Session
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT DRUGS!
I know he's using but maybe I shouldn't say so.
I hope these PILLS don't do to me what they did to José!

Lesson 10

What Happens When Your Head is in the Sand?

Goal: To assist students to consider that they may be denying strong feelings, and to demonstrate to students the concept of denial.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, a plastic racket, a soft ball.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be learning more about denial. To teach students what denial is, give one student a plastic racket then **toss** a soft ball at the racket and **give** silly feedback (such as "You look silly wearing five hats at once.") **Direct** the student to bat away the ball. **Inform** the class that this demonstration illustrates how people can "bat away" painful things they are reluctant to deal with. **Give** each student a turn at batting away feedback with the racket.

▲ **Ask** each student to relay an example of someone who denies things they don't want to deal with, and **follow-up** with the following questions:

- *How do you feel when someone denies important information?*
- *Who can best spot denial? The person who is denying, or people around them? (the person around them)*
- *What often happens to people who continue to deny? (their problems often seriously worsen)*

▲ **Assist** the students to determine that denial is often identified by others, not the person themselves, and that denied problems often seriously worsen if denial persists.

2. ▲ **Aid** the class to determine that denial is a normal way for people to attempt to take care of themselves as best they can, and that everyone does it to some degree. **Discuss** the types of problems people often deny, and include alcohol dependence, gambling, eating disorders, etc. **Note** that in this group, no one will be forced to give up denial, because denying means you aren't quite ready to address a problem; in this group, people will be eased into taking peeks at their problems as they are ready.

▲ **Aid** each student to identify what they prefer to deny, and **assist** the group to gently give feedback to group members who need help acknowledging these areas. (Defensive students can be given the racket to bat away feedback, then eased into acknowledging their problem area.)

3. ▲ **Ask** the class to consider what happens to people who acknowledge and face their problems, and **aid** them to determine that these people often surmount the difficulties they face. **Aid** the class to determine that evading problems leaves you with worsening problems by posing this question:

- *When you have your head in the sand, what is vulnerable?*

4. ▲ **Ask** each student to describe how they do and do not like to be helped to look at problems they prefer to deny. **Assure** each group member that the group will attempt to respond in the manner described.

5. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **It is normal to want to avoid dealing with painful things.**
- **Denial is often most readily spotted by those around you.**
- **People who continue to deny problems are vulnerable to worsening problems.**
- **You must face problems to solve problems.**

Lesson 11

The Good News About Me

Goal: To build students' self-esteem.

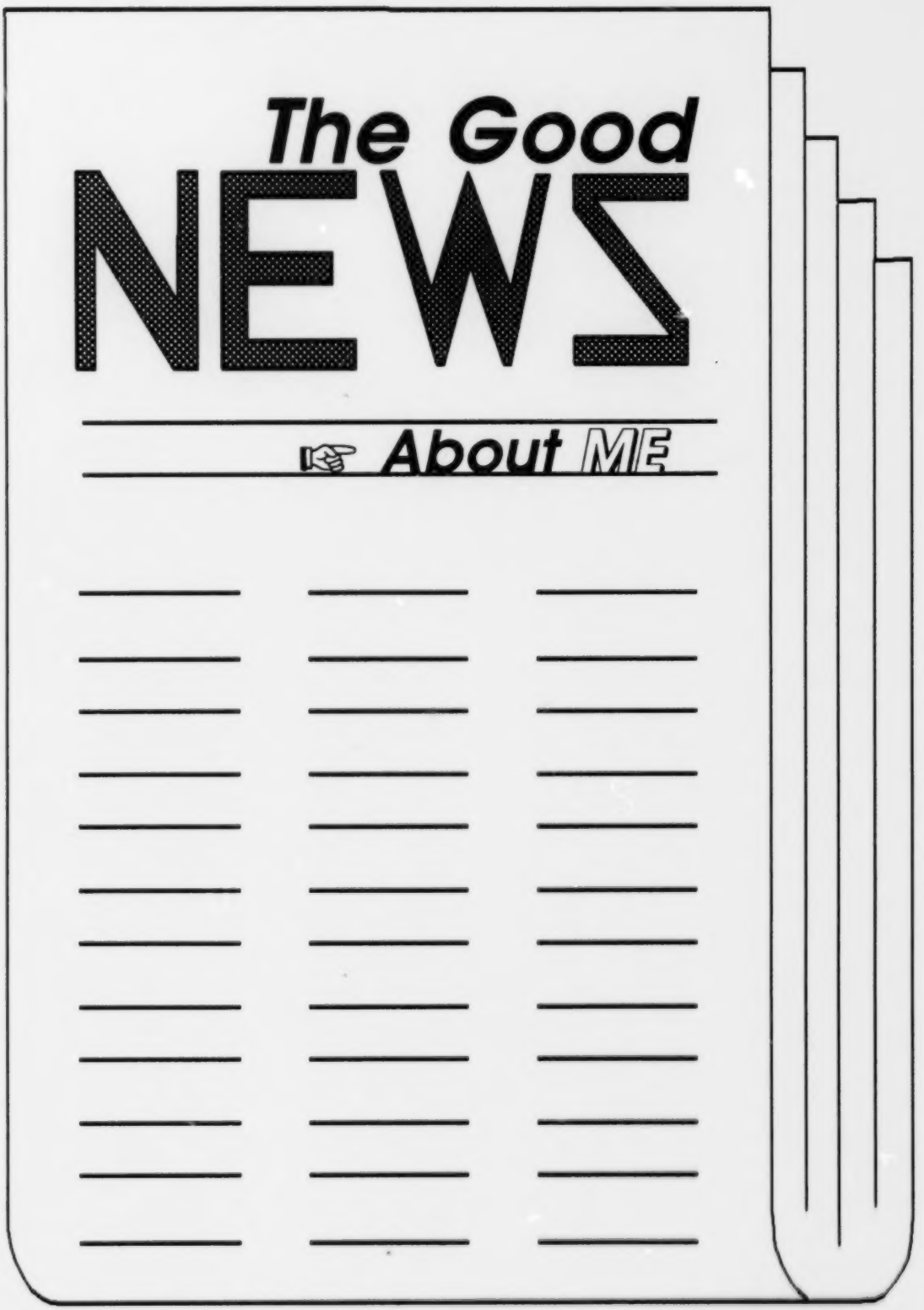
Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, pens, paper, one copy for each student of the Good News Newspaper Page.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be investigating what "good news" there is about them. **Ask** the students to pretend that they are objective reporters who must write newspaper stories about themselves. Before writing the article, they must solicit information about the subject from their peers. **Pass out** paper and pens, then **direct** the students to gather the good news about themselves from the other students.

2. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will now write their story about the "Good News About Me" onto the Good News Newspaper Page. **Pass out** the art supplies and copies of the newspaper page.

3. ▲ **Direct** each student to share their article with the class, and **aid** the class to offer positive feedback and other suggestions. **Post** the newspapers.

4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**
   - **There is plenty of "good news" about you that you may not always notice.**
   - **You have many positive, valuable qualities that are noticed by others.**


The Good
NEWS
About ME

Lesson 12

Deny It or Not, You May Be Gang-Dependent

Goal: To assist students to evaluate whether gang membership is suited for them.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, one copy for each student (plus several extra copies) of the Are You Gang-Dependent? Quiz, pens.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be investigating why group members have chosen or are considering gang membership. **Ask** students to complete the "Are You Gang-Dependent? Quiz", then **discuss** each student's results with the group. **Allow** the students to complete the quiz any way they wish, but **encourage** confrontation during the discussion. **Direct** the class to redo the quiz for each student they feel did not accurately represent the situation, and is in denial.

2. ▲ **Ask** the students who have been identified as gang-dependent, or at risk of it, to look at the items shown on the quiz, and to ask if those items really fit their personality. For example, a strong-minded student might be encouraged to explore if their personality really is suited to having the gang make many of their decisions for them. **Allow** students to confront each other, and all adults should **avoid** confronting, but instead actively **facilitate** peer confrontation, which may be a particularly effective force.

3. ▲ **Aid** the class to assist the gang-affected students to identify that gangs, like everything else in our world, has some positive and negative aspects. **Ask** each gang-affected youth to cite their personal positive and negative qualities. **Encourage** students to offer both positive and negative comments, and **acknowledge** to the group that gangs appear to offer members many benefits that they have not been able to readily obtain elsewhere. **Write** these benefits on the board, and **discuss** how a need for these benefits can make gang membership very attractive despite drawbacks. (Note: Students will more candidly offer their feelings if feedback from adults is empathetic and non-judgmental. It is critical to at least acknowledge the benefits gang members experience if they are to aided to reduce their dependency.)

▲ **Remind** the students that just as gangs appear to meet its members' needs, so are the needs of other co-dependents met by the person or thing they depend on. **Assist** the class to compare the perceived benefits of gangs with the perceived benefits of other dependencies, i.e. what benefits could someone claim to get from their reliance on alcohol, drugs, or on a substance abuser? **Assist** the group to realize that dependent people want the perceived benefits of their dependence and appreciate the feeling of support, safety, closeness, belonging, etc. **Note** that these benefits make dependencies hard to stop.

▲ **Acknowledge** that dependence on gangs or other people/substances offers significant perceived benefits, or else people would not become hooked to the people or substance. **Write** on the board and **ask** the students to consider if:

- *Are the perceived benefits of gangs worth dying for?*

▲ **Ask** the students to complete an art, writing, music or other project that expresses their response to the query shown above, and to bring it with them to class for the next session.

4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **One characteristic of gang-dependence is that you modify your personality to fit the gang.**
- **Gang members evidence many of the same characteristics of dependency as co-dependents, alcoholics, addicts and others.**
- **All dependents perceive benefits in their dependency.**
- **Gang-dependents often risk death.**

Are YOU Gang-Dependent?

Rate yourself on each of the items shown.

Do you put a gang:

❑ YES	❑ NO	Before yourself?
❑ YES	❑ NO	Over your personal style?
❑ YES	❑ NO	Above laws and rules?
❑ YES	❑ NO	Above your own beliefs?
❑ YES	❑ NO	Ahead of your independence?
❑ YES	❑ NO	In charge of your decisions?
❑ YES	❑ NO	Ahead of your own desires?
❑ YES	❑ NO	Above your safety?
❑ YES	❑ NO	Ahead of life and death?
❑ YES	❑ NO	Over friends?
❑ YES	❑ NO	Over your individual personality?
❑ YES	❑ NO	Over personal interests?
❑ YES	❑ NO	Before your own future?

If YES is checked more than three times, deny it or not, you may be GANG-DEPENDENT

If YES is checked more than twice, deny it or not, you may be at risk of GANG-DEPENDENCE

Lesson 13

Just One Chance to Dream

Goal: To assist students to begin/continue to work for their dreams.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be investigating what they must do to reach their dreams. **Assist** each student to share some information about their dreams. (Students who refuse to respond, can be asked, "If you had a dream, what would it be?")

2. ▲ **Ask** the students to determine how achieve their dreams. **Assist** the students to cite examples of people they know or have seen in the media who pursue or don't pursue their goals. **Aid** the class to group these people into the following groups:

- *Dream Reachers: who actively work towards reaching their dreams*
- *Dream Wasters: who say they want a goal but do little to reach it*
- *Dream Destroyers: who say they have no dream then work as hard as they can to destroy the dream that they deny even exists*

3. ▲ **Direct** the group to discuss with each member, which type of dream category, most accurately describes them. **Discuss** with each student the "why's" of their behavior, with special emphasis on the self-hatred that must fuel a dream destroyer and the despair that must be faced by the Dream Waster.

▲ **Ask** the students to speculate where the Dream Waster and Dream Destroyer must learn their self-sabotaging behavior. **Aid** the group to recognize that these people function as their "own worst enemy", and **discuss** how hard that way of living life must be. **Ask** the class to determine what could result in nature if different life forms were there "own worst enemy", using the following examples:

- *the tree that grows away from the water it needs to survive*
- *the animal that runs towards it's predator*
- *the plant that grows away from the sunlight it needs to survive*
- *the animal that refuses to accept nourishment*

▲ **Assist** the students to consider how many opportunities nature provides to life forms that are their own worst enemy. (Just one, no second chances). **Ask** each student to consider if they wish to waste or destroy or waste their only chance. **Aid** the class to appropriately confront any student who still resists working for their dream, and to require those resistant students to compete an out-of-class task on "If I Had a Dream" or other similar project where the student explores what they will miss by wasting or destroying the dream. This project should be brought to the next group and students can be assisted, if needed, to identify a time and place to complete this task.

4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **To reach your dream, you must admit you have one and then work towards achieving it.**
- **You are given just one chance to pursue your dreams in life; there are no second chances once your life is over or ending and you discover you wished you hadn't wasted your dreams.**
- **Now is your chance to pursue your dreams.**

Lesson 14

Denying Can Mean Dying

Goal: To assist students to consider the real risks of denying serious dependency.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, one copy for each student of "Characteristics of Dependents", one copy for each student of "What Does Denial Look Like? Cartoons".

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be investigating the consequences of serious dependency. **Review** meaning of the term "dependent" and **discuss** that there are characteristics widely attributed to persons who are dependent. **Distribute** a copy of "Characteristics of Dependents" and review with the class.

▲ **Ask** the class to adapt the items on the list to types of dependencies affecting the students, such as gangs, addiction to abusive partners, substances, etc. For example, **substitute** the word "gang" for "relationship" and review the list again, then discuss whether the altered lists accurately becomes "Characteristics of Gang-Dependents".

2. ▲ **Ask** the class to imagine what sentences dependents say when confronted with the list of characteristics. **Pass out** copies of "What Does Denial Look Like? Cartoons" and **direct** the students to add in phrases they've heard used to deny dependencies.

▲ **Discuss** with the class the difficulties of reaching someone in denial. **Elicit** examples from their lives or from movies, TV and literature that they have experienced or seen denial; **ask** the students to discuss how they felt interacting with people who are in denial.

▲ **Discuss** how what can happen to alcoholics, substance abusers, prostitutes, daredevils and others who deny the danger they are in. **Relate** these comments to the dependencies that affect the students.

3. ▲ **Ask** the class to list off types of addicts, such as alcoholics, people with eating disorders, etc. and to list the possible outcomes of continued denial. **Assist** the group to determine that continued denial of serious dependencies can lead to death--even for youngsters. **Aid** the group to apply this understanding to the dependencies that affect the class members, and to recognize that denying these dependencies can lead to dying.

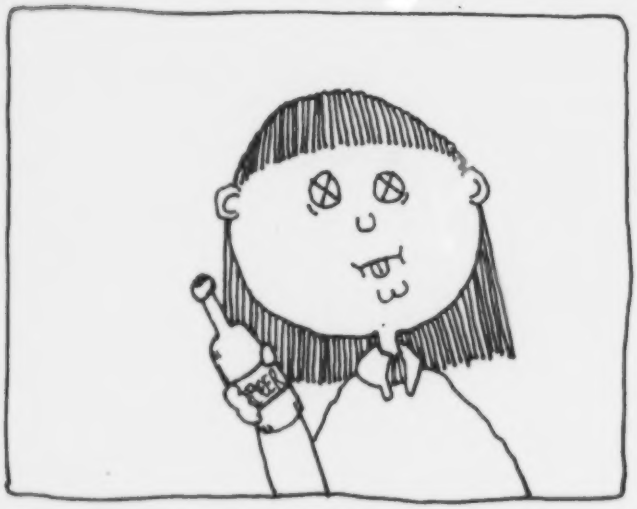
▲ **Discuss** with the class how difficult it can be for people to watch other people self-endanger, moving towards possibly dying. **Discuss** if it is possible to stop someone from "denying their way to dying". **Aid** the class to recognize that no one can compel or force change in another person, even if the person risks dying; the change must come from the person themselves, not from outside.

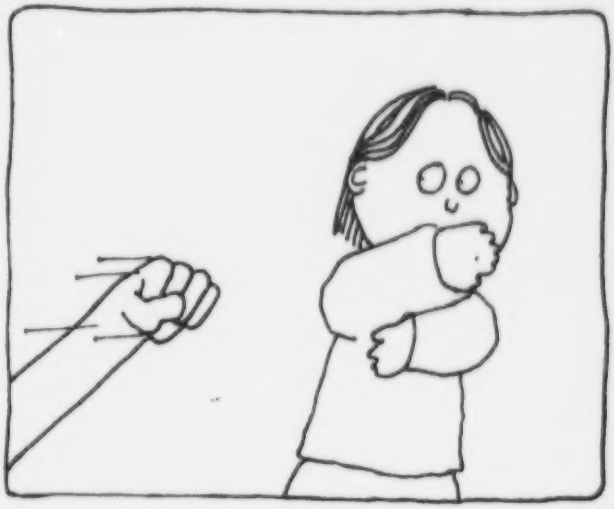
4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

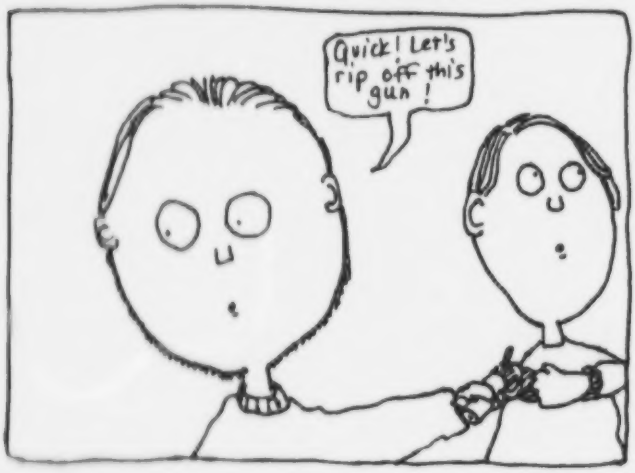
- **Dependent people share a predictable set of characteristics.**
- **Dependent people often use predictable ways to deny their addiction.**
- **Only the dependent person can make changes; others can only assist in the process, not mandate it.**
- **Continued denial of serious dependencies can lead to dying-- and this applies to both young and older dependents.**
- **People can become dangerously dependent on substances, people, gangs and violence.**

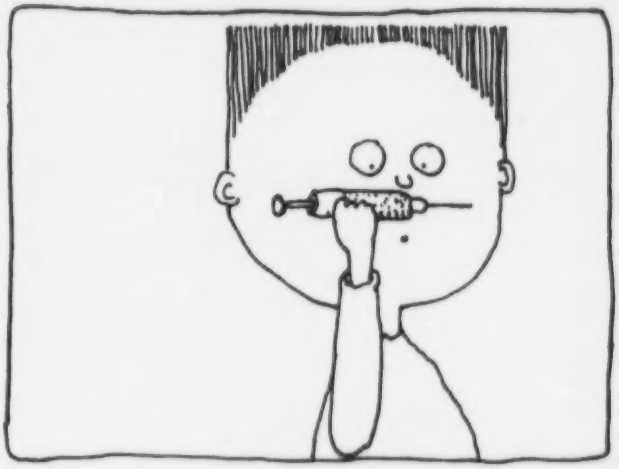
WHAT DOES DENIAL LOOK LIKE?

Write in the denial phrases these people use.









Characteristics of Co-Dependents

These characteristics are commonly associated with co-dependent people and were developed by people who are/were co-dependent, and first identified the concept of co-dependency. These traits have been adapted to fit young people but are very similar to the characteristics that are often discussed in Adults Children of Alcoholic, Women Who Love Too Much and Al-Anon type meetings, recovery groups and books. They may apply to someone you know.

1. "Nice", stable, reliable, safe people are boring, "dumb" or irrelevant to you; but dangerous, unsafe, unwise relationships captivate, excite or interest you.

2. You prefer the excitement or stress generated by unsafe, unstable, dangerous relationships rather than face other feelings, such as loneliness, depression, sadness, grief or fear.

3. You are strongly pulled towards people with problems that need fixing; you become deeply caught up and entangled in relationships that are chaotic, dangerous, violent, uncertain and painful. In this way, you avoid looking at yourself.

4. You may be pre-disposed to become addicted to alcohol, gangs, violence, substances, thrill-seeking, food, fantasy or problem relationships.

5. You are addicted to relationships that involve much crisis, stress, violence, emotional pain or upheaval.

6. You prefer to look only at your hopes and dreams of how your relationship could be rather than at the grim, everyday reality of your actual situation.

7. Your self-esteem is very low and you do not believe that you deserve to be happy, content or successful. Being in a problematic relationship further downgrades your social, emotional and physical well-being and confirms your feelings of low self-worth and shame.

8. You always excuse the serious problems in the relationship, and defend and explain why the problems aren't problems, and why the problems will get better, stop very soon or won't happen anymore.

9. Almost nothing is too much trouble, too much time, too expensive, too dangerous, too scary or too illegal to maintain your relationship. The relationship is first and all, above all else.

Lesson 15

Who Needs Gangs?

Goal: To assist students to evaluate whether gang membership is the best course of action for them.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, one copy of "Who Needs Gangs? Work Sheet" for each student, pens.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be investigating gangs and focusing on why youth would be attracted to gang membership. **Ask** students to complete the "Who Needs Gangs? Work Sheet" to determine why some people join gangs. **Direct** the students to circle the phrase on each line that best describes who joins gangs. **Encourage** the students to edit and add to the list until it reflects your community.

2. ▲ **Ask** the class to each think of the people they most care about in the world. One at a time, **ask** each student to say who is the person they most care about. Next, **ask** each student to determine if they would want this person to be a gang member. Most/all students should respond that they would not want their loved one endangered via gang participation. **Assist** these youth who are gang members or at-risk of gang membership, to realize that they would not place a loved one in such danger, but might place themselves in it.

3. ▲ **Ask** the class to examine how someone could not be willing to place a loved one into a gang situation, but might willingly expose themselves to such danger. **Assist** the group to recognize that such a person must be experiencing some degree of self-hate and denial, and **compare** this self-hate and denial to dying via substance abuse, prostitution or suicide. **Aid** the class to recognize that gang membership is self-destructive, and can be viewed as a type of suicide or Russian Roulette, and only involves people who are angry and unhappy with themselves.

4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **Most youth who join gangs, "need" gangs.**
- **Most gang members do not care as much for their own safety as they do for the well-being of other people that they care about.**
- **Gang membership can be so dangerous that it rivals street prostitution, serious substance abuse, daredevil activities and suicide in its riskiness.**

Who Needs Gangs?

Circle the phrases that describe kids who "need" gangs. Change and add to this list until it accurately reflects why kids in your neighborhood join street gangs.

Kids with just a few family problems	Kids with many family problems
Kids involved in many positive community activities	Kids with nothing to do
Kids whose parents are often not around	Kids whose parents give them ample time
Kids who are often happy	Kids who are often unhappy
Kids who say they don't care if they live or die	Kids who say they want to live
Kids who have lots of friends and family to spend time with them	Kids who feel lonely a lot
Kids whose parents use lots of substances	Kids whose family members are usually sober
Kids whose family obeys most laws and rules	Kids whose brothers or sisters are already in gangs
Kids who like themselves	Kids who don't like themselves a lot of the time
Kids who want a great future	Kids who aren't sure they want a future
Kids who need to be part of a group to feel ok	Kids that like themselves whether they're part of a group or not
Kids who hurt badly inside	Kids who feel ok inside or know where to get help when they don't
Kids supported by the community	Kids in a troubled community and those that aren't fully included in the community

Lesson 16

Building Cooperation in Group

Goal: To aid group members to begin to cooperate as a step towards developing the group cohesiveness and teamwork needed for eventual group problem-solving.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, one copy for each student of the "Find Someone List", pens.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be learning about cooperation and the value of teamwork. **Pass out** the "Find Someone List" and **direct** the students to find someone in the group who would best assist them to complete the tasks shown on the list. **Direct** the students to include each group member's name at least once. **Permit** the students to talk with each other to complete the lists.

2. ▲ **Ask** the students to share the results of completing the list by reviewing the list one item a time with all the students sharing who they selected for each item, and why. **Direct** the students to share their feedback directly with the person being discussed, using a sentence similar to *"Mario, you would be the person I'd ask for help with a bully because I've seen you handle people like that in the past without anyone getting hurt or in trouble."*

▲ **Identify** to the group that the group members appear to have many strengths to offer each other for the problem-solving that will be the eventual focus of the group.

3. ▲ **Assist** each of the students to identify which other group members they would feel comfortable sharing at least some personal information with, based on what they've learned today about those people.

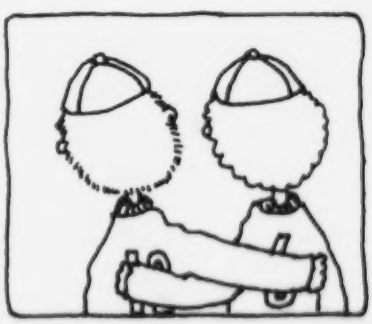
4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **The group members have experience and knowledge they can use to help each other.**
- **The students are learning cooperation.**
- **By cooperating with each other, and directly sharing information, the group can begin to offer problem-solving help to members.**

Find SOMEONE
List

Find someone to...

1. Plan a party with you
2. Help find a lost book
3. Loan you money for lunch
4. Solve a problem
5. Help you finish your homework
6. Help you cope with a bully
7. Open your jammed locker
8. Talk to the principal with you
9. Go to the movies with over the weekend
10. Share a good joke with
11. Eat lunch with you
12. Loan you a pen
13. Share your extra candy bar
14. Walk home with
15. Talk with about the football game
16. Play frisbee with
17. Give you directions to the new theater
18. Suggest a good place to get a hamburger
19. Recommend a book
20. Study for the history test with you.



Lesson 17

Developing Group Rules

Goal: To teach students the basics of therapy group operation, demonstrate the value of group, and to cooperatively develop group rules.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, several pieces of poster board or construction paper, markers, pens and paper, tape or thumbtacks.

1. ▲ **Ask** the students to determine the reasons for having a therapy group. **Permit** students to express negative or skeptical feelings about counseling.

▲ **Ask** the students if they are participating in counseling voluntarily or involuntarily, and **encourage** them to share their reactions to being in group counseling. **Offer** empathetic comments to group members who express negative responses.

2. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be taking charge of the group as they are ready so that even if they attend group involuntarily they will at least have a fair amount of control over what the group is like and what it does. **Assist** the group to determine that they will need a format or structure to manage the group, approximating or including the items that follow, that can be called "Group Rules". **Write** the draft suggestions on the board, discuss and edit, then transfer the final version onto poster board and post:

- *Confidentiality: What is said in the room, stays in the room.*
- *Respect for Others: All comments to others must be helpful, not hurtful.*
- *Talk One at a Time: Don't interrupt.*
- *Stay in the Room: Remain in the room even if you become upset.*
- *Choose a Group Leader: Each young person will take a turn at leading the group and will be responsible for enforcing the rules, with help from the adult and peers.*
- *Check In and Out of Group: Let everyone know how your day or life is going by saying "I feel..." at the start and end of group.*
- *Request Time to Talk: When they check in at the start of group, each group member will say how much time they need to take so the group leader can ensure all members get time; additional time can be requested also at any point during the group session.*
- *Arrive on Time: On time arrival means in the room by the appointed time, not one second late. The group may wish to develop a standard consequence for latecomers, such as baking cookies for the next group session, writing an essay or cleaning up after the session. This saves time deciding consequences each time.*
- *You have the responsibility to confront: This is the most important rule. In order for the young people to really run the group, they must confront each other with issues and problems that they are aware of.*

3. **Discuss** the final version of the rules, and **inform** the students that they will be learning more about each of these areas as the group begins functioning. **Ask** the class to indicate the results of following or not following each rule. **Elicit** responses such as, "If I don't confront Juan with his gang membership, then he could die in a gang fight, and I might have been able to help prevent that."

▲ **Discuss** how the group will implement their rules, and the likely problems and areas that they feel they will need additional help with.

4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **Even if you are unhappy about participating in a group, you will be able to have a lot of control over how the group operates.**
- **Group rules are necessary to ensure that group is a safe, comfortable, and productive place for members to address and work on their problems.**
- **The group has the potential to positively improve the members' lives.**
- **The most important group rule is to confront others; this ensures that the group can work and that everyone stays safe.**

Lesson 18

What's Great About Me?

Goal: To build students' self-esteem

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, paper and pen for each student.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be learning more about how great they are by giving and getting personal feedback. **Direct** the class members to each develop a fill-in-the-blank questionnaire with five questions. The questionnaire could include sentences such as *"Best sportis _____"* or *"Do a really good job at _____"*.

2. ▲ **Collect** all the questionnaires and then complete each students' questionnaire one at a time with the group by asking the group for how that student fares on each item. Do not allow students to dispute feedback, but accept it by saying thank-you. **Ask** students to offer feedback directly by saying their comments to the person, using phrases such as "Mohammed, you really are a great artist."

3. ▲ **Ask** each student to complete their own questionnaire writing their own responses about themselves, then share this effort with the group. Students who are unwilling to participate, can be allowed to do so privately or at home, or to change the positive words such as "best" and "great" to "ok" and "pretty good"

4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **You have many positive qualities that your peers notice.**
- **When given feedback, say "thank-you" or offer a similar response; do not challenge what the person is telling you- they have a right to their opinion even if you think they are wrong.**

Lesson 19

Only You Can Deny Your Gang-Dependence

Goal: To aid gang-dependent students to consider if they are denying their gang-dependence.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, art, music or tape supplies.

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be investigating dying and denying as it relates to gang membership. **Review** the terms gang-dependent (addicted to gangs) and denial (reporting that a problem is not a problem). **Ask** students to develop the art, music, writing or other project to express their reaction to the query: *Are the perceived benefits of gangs worth dying for?*

2. ▲ One at a time, **review** with the group each of the projects, and **elicit** strong peer feedback as appropriate. If necessary, **aid** the class to address the reasons some students did not complete the project, and **ask** the class to develop a plan for following up on the assignment.

3. ▲ **Ask** the students to each offer to give or dedicate their project to one peer, then **display** it prominently, or otherwise showcase and hallmark their contribution. For example, an audio tape project could be broadcast throughout the school or a written project could be duplicated and sent to each classroom. Alternately, a student could be encouraged to offer their work to a gang-affected peer, and relay their feelings for the student.

4. ▲ **Aid** the class to consider how they feel watching gang-dependent students risk their futures for their dependency. **Ask** the students to personalize their comments and to direct them to the peers they wish to. **Structure** the comments to be direct, personal, emotional and powerful by encouraging students to say their feedback using phrases such as "*Ramon, I feel sad when I see you being involved in drive-by shootings because even though we don't get along, I really care about you and don't want to be going to your funeral*". Don't permit general, unfocused, detached comments such as "*Gangs hurt you and cause problems.*" **Ask** that student "*Who gets hurt? Can you tell that person?*" **Ensure** that students listen to and respond to feedback they receive.

▲ **Ask** the students to think of dependent people they know, and to relate what happened to these persons and how it felt to care about these people as they self-destructed. **Ask** the students to compare those experiences with the feelings they are having now for their gang-involved peers. **Note** to the gang-dependent youth, that they appear to have many peers who are concerned about them and their safety, and troubled by their denial.

5. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **Gang-dependent students are at risk of dying or being injured.**
- **Denying the danger faced by gang members does not reduce the risk.**
- **Many people wish that the gang members cared enough about themselves to stay safe.**

Lesson 20

The Cost of My Actions

Goal: To assist students to determine the "costs" of their actions before (instead of after) they have taken the action.

Materials: Chalkboard, chalk, "Is It Really Worth It? Handout, pens

1. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be investigating the advantages of thinking ahead versus thinking later. **Ask** the students to determine what is the "usual" time that they realize that they've made a bad choice. **Assist** the students to determine that they generally evaluate their actions once seated in the principal's office, police car or detention room. **Inform** the students that they will be learning it is possible and more beneficial to think prior to ending up in those locations.

2. ▲ **Inform** the students that they will be evaluating the "costs" of their actions now rather than later using the "Is It Really Worth It?" handout. **Direct** the students to fill in the handout in a manner similar to the example shown at the top of that page. The first two boxes are left empty for students to insert their own past or likely future situations. Be sure students insert actual past or likely future scenarios that they will encounter.

▲ **Review** each student's sheet with the class. **Assist** students to add in costs that they may have missed and to cross out actions that they decide are too costly to do.

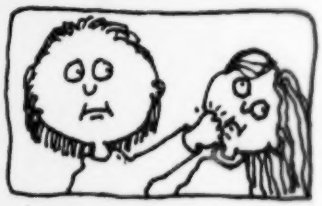
3. ▲ **Discuss** with the class how evaluating actions in terms of their monetary and personal costs can help them to avoid engaging in actions that have high costs. **Ask** each student to list out additional actions that they want to avoid due to the monetary and personal high costs.

▲ **Discuss** with the class this observation: *If you get caught, you are going to evaluate your actions in the principal's office or police station, so either way you will be thinking, but only prior evaluation allows you to think when thinking can still make a difference.*

4. ▲ **Review the major points of this lesson:**

- **The time to evaluate the costs of an action is before you are receiving the consequences of that action.**
- **Evaluating actions prior to doing them, gives you the chance to avoid substantial monetary and personal pain.**
- **When trying to decide whether or not to become involved in an action, determine the monetary and personal pain costs to you.**

IS IT REALLY WORTH IT?



	"Money Cost" to You	"Pain Cost" to You
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